

May 9 ,2007

Contact: Robin Winchell (202) 225-4031

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon announced today that ports in south Louisiana would receive over \$3.2 million in federal grants to assist with improving port security. The Greater Lafourche Port Commission will receive \$1,182,527 to improve security at Port Fourchon, the Louisiana Offshore Oil Port (LOOP) Deepwater Port Complex will receive \$1,040,173, and the Port of South Louisiana will receive \$975,000 in federal grant money. The Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office will also receive a \$140,625 grant. The funding is awarded through the Department of Homeland Security's Port Security Grant Program, which provides federal grants to improve security and prevent terrorist attacks at U.S. ports deemed to be of national significance.

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"America's energy and economic security are dependent on Louisiana's port security," said Rep. Melancon. **"Louisiana's ports not only play a key role in transporting millions of barrels of crude oil a day into the United States, they also service the offshore oil rigs supplying more than 75% of the Gulf's deepwater oil production. I am pleased DHS is recognizing that our ports are a vital part of the national infrastructure with these homeland security grants."**

Energy ports like Port Fourchon and the LOOP almost missed out on receiving these important federal security grants this year. Last summer, DHS had announced that energy ports were no longer eligible to participate in the Port Security Grant Program and only ports determined by DHS to have certain commercial, economic, or strategic value were eligible to apply.

As a member of the House-Senate conference committee that finalized the SAFE Port Act, Rep. Melancon worked to ensure language was included in the final bill that expanded the eligible criteria for the Port Security Grant Program to include energy ports like Port Fourchon and the LOOP in south Louisiana. Prior to passage of this legislation, Rep. Melancon had also sent DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff a letter in July of 2006 arguing the Port Fourchon's obvious strategic importance as a major supplier of oil and gas for the U.S. and had met with DHS officials to discuss the issue (click [here](#) to view).

"Due to [Port Fourchon's] location in the Central Gulf, it has become the focal point of oil and gas activities and serves as the central supply base for oil rigs and production platforms in the Gulf of Mexico," wrote Rep. Melancon. **"With Port Fourchon serving such a pivotal role in this energy activity, it *must* be eligible to apply for grants under the Port Security Grant Program."**

Currently between 16 and 18% of the entire U.S. supply of domestic and foreign crude oil travels through Port Fourchon and the LOOP and Oil rigs supplying more than 75% of the Gulf's deepwater oil production rely on Port Fourchon for service.

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